

RESILIENCE

GLOBAL NEWS

LEAD WRITER: MARYAM ELMANSY



A NEW SYRIA: WHAT'S NEXT?

In December 8th, Bashar Al Assad was overthrown by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a militant group led by Ahmed Al Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohammad al-Jolani. Upon their capture of Damascus, they headed to prison to release the thousands of innocent civilians who had been detained by the Assad regime, some having been missing since 1987 during the rule of his father, Hafez Al Assad. While many have returned to their families, many other detainees are still missing. However, Syrians have gathered and celebrated the beginning of a new era. Hundreds have used social media to speak out against the regime, something once impossible to do under the decades-long rule. But will this freedom and liberation be long-term? The Israeli Occupying Forces are currently attacking the buffer zone that separates them from Syria, which is along the Golan Heights. United Nations members say that this is a violation of international law, specifically the 1974 Disengagement Agreement which applied the buffer zone and demanded that Israeli forces withdraw from the region. While these events unfold, it is difficult to anticipate what will happen to Syria and its people, even if they plan to rebuild their homeland.



MAZEN AL HAMADA: THE FACE OF SYRIAN ACTIVISM

The day after the Assad regime was overthrown, Syrian activist Mazen Al Hamada's body was found, indicating he had been killed just before Assad fled to Moscow, Russia. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, Mazen has protested against the Syrian regime's rule. He was later detained and sent to prison in 2012 and was released after a year and a half. He decided to leave Syria and go to the Netherlands to speak against the torture he was subjected to in prison. His goal was to get justice for the Syrian people, but when Mazen went back to Syria in 2020 he was detained once more. No one heard from him until his mutilated body was identified among the thousands of other corpses. It is believed that the regime lured him by promising safety if he were to return to Syria. Many Syrians came to Damascus to attend his funeral, angered at the revelation of his fate. They chanted, "We will not forget your blood, Mazen," as they marched through the city. Today, Mazen is seen to Syrians as a symbol of bravery and courage during harsh times.

LEAD WRITER: JENNA ELMASRY

It only takes one man to change the direction of history. The Battle of Ahzab, also known as the Battle of the Trench, was one of the most important moments in the early days of Islam.

Through this tense situation, a man named Nuaym ibn Mas'ud stepped forward. Nuaym was a respected leader from the Ghitfan tribe, and although he had recently embraced Islam in secret, no one from the enemies knew of his conversion. As he saw the danger that his new faith was in, Nuaym approached Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) with a bold proposition. He wished that he be told as to how he could serve Islam.

First, Nuaym visited the Jewish tribe of Banu Quraizah. Pretending to be their ally, he warned them, "The Quraish and Ghitfan are not truly loyal to you. If the battle turns against them, they will abandon you and return to their homes, leaving you at the mercy of Muhammad and his companions. To protect yourselves, demand hostages from the Quraish and insure that they are important chiefs so that you are guaranteed their support in order for them to take their men back." The leaders of Banu Quraizah nodded and considered his advice. It seemed wise to ensure their own safety in case the tides turned.

The map illustrates the strategic layout of the Battle of Uhud. Key elements include:

- Geographical Features:** Mount Uhud, Mount Sela, Mount Humadat, Valley of Akeq, Valley of Kanat, and the Jurf.
- Quraysh Forces:** Represented by red grid patterns, including Quraish Troops, Gatafan Troops, and a group including Kinana, Ased, Saleem, Murra, Shuja, and Fuzarah. They are positioned on the slopes of Mount Uhud.
- Muslim Forces:** Represented by blue grid patterns, including various tribes like Banu Nabit, Banu Abdul-ashal, Banu Zafer, Banu Haris, Banu Najjar, Banu Zurye, Banu Vakif, Banu Kynuka, Banu Qurayza, Banu Nadir, Banu Awf, Banu Awf-bin-Malik, Banu Bayza, Banu Habla, and Banu Sa'ida. They are positioned in the valley and on the slopes of Mount Sela.
- Key Locations:** The Prophet's Mosque, Kaeb-bin-Ashraf castle, and Dahyan Castle are marked.
- Muslim Command:** Indicated by a green square near the Prophet's Mosque.
- Arrows:** Red arrows show the movement of the Quraysh forces towards the Muslim camp.

Over the next few days, tension grew. When Banu Quraizah demanded hostages, the Quraish and Ghitfan flatly refused, accusing them of treachery. In turn, Banu Quraizah became angry and withdrew their support because they feared they had been abandoned. The alliance, once united in its goal to destroy Medina, was now on the brink of collapse.

Nuaym bin Mas'ud's bravery and intelligence had turned the tide of the battle. Without raising a sword, he had single-handedly separated the enemy alliance. His quick thinking and unshakable faith in Allah subhana wa ta'ala saved the Muslims from what seemed like complete defeat.

Nuaym's heroic character reminds us that true strength lies not just in physical power but in courage, intelligence, and the willingness to risk everything for what you believe in. He proved that even one person, with determination and faith, can change the course of history.

ISLAMIC REMINDERS

LEAD WRITER: SAAD AKHTAR



REMINDER 1: LESSONS LEARNED FROM SITUATION IN SYRIA

Over the recent months, Bashar Al Assad, the former leader of Syria has been overthrown. Something important that this event teaches us is that Allah SWT is truly the only one that is able to provide for anyone.

This quality is characterized in the name of Allah SWT, Al-Razzaq. Al Razzaq is the name of Allah SWT that encompasses his provision. When recognizing this name, one recognizes that Allah is the only one that can provide provision to anyone, no matter what the world may try to do. This is shown through the 19th Hadith in the 40 Hadith of Imam an-Nawawi, in which the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, says: "Know that if the whole world were to gather together in order to help you, they would not be able to help you except if God had written so. And if the whole world were to gather together in order to harm you, they would not harm you except if God had written so." (Tirmidhi) In this situation, Allah SWT decided to give victory to the rebel forces. This is a powerful reminder of the actuality of Allah's words, when he states: "at the victory willed by Allah. He gives victory to whoever He wills. For He is the Almighty, Most Merciful." (30:5) So, always remember that Allah SWT is the one who is in control of affairs, no matter who may seem like they are in charge. This is because Allah SWT is the King of Kings, the one who truly provides, and anything that provides you other than Him is only a means that He has facilitated His provision through. Additionally, this serves as a reminder to bear whatever Allah tests you with, as Allah SWT says in the Quran: "So, surely with hardship comes ease." (94:5) In fact, the bearing of trials is a way for one to gain tremendous rewards in the next life. "The people who lived in prosperity will wish on the Day of Resurrection to have the reward of those who were put to trial" (Tirmidhi 2402) However, the bearing of trials does not just gain reward, it also expiates sins as the Prophet, peace be upon him stated: "No tiredness, exhaustion, worry, grief, distress or harm befalls a believer in this world, not even a thorn that pricks him, but Allah expiates some of his sins thereby." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5210; Muslim, 4670) So, remember that whenever a test appears in your life, be steadfast, as Allah SWT will reward you, forgive your sins, and provide you with ease after your hardship.

CAMPUS EVENTS

LEAD WRITER: ALEENA ASLAM



World Arabic Language Day has been celebrated since 2012 as an initiative by the United Nations to foster unity among nations. Noor-Ul-Iman School commemorates this day by encouraging students to

embrace their identity and learn more about Arab culture. Students are invited to wear clothing that represents a culture from the Arab region and participate in skill-based activities rooted in those traditions. This year, the high school students could choose from calligraphy, henna, and Palestinian tatreez.

To end off an exciting year, students had Monday off for a teachers in service day, and the Student Council decided to make the last week of school spirit week to end on a high note.

Calligraphy has long been used to create elaborate murals or to present eloquent sayings in a visually appealing way. At Noor-Ul-Iman School, students practiced calligraphy by writing Arabic names and phrases, gaining an appreciation for this unique style of art. Henna offered another hands-on way for students to explore artistic traditions. Often referred to as temporary tattoos, henna involves creating intricate patterns on the skin using a natural dye from the henna plant.



This art form holds deep cultural significance, especially during weddings and festivals, as a symbol of joy and good fortune. With guidance from instructors, students learned how to apply detailed patterns using henna cones. Similarly, Palestinian tatreez provided students with an opportunity to engage in a creative activity steeped in culture and history. Tatreez, a traditional Palestinian embroidery style, goes beyond simple stitching by telling stories about identity and heritage. Patterns often vary by region and include symbols like olive trees to represent connections to the land. At Noor-Ul-Iman School, students practiced stitching basic designs, discovering the care and focus needed to honor this meaningful tradition.

January brought many wins for the Science Olympiad Team who participated in the regional competition at Union College of NJ recently. Noor-Ul-Iman School won 8th overall and officially advanced to the state competition on March 11th. Noor-Ul-Iman School also won 4 medals in different categories. Shayan Ahmed and Yahya Atiya placed first in the event 'Write it Do it'. Additionally, Shayan Ahmed and Yahya Usman won 3rd place in 'Astronomy' and Yahya Usman and Zeake Khan won 4th place in 'Optics.' Finally, Soba Fatima and Maleeha Noor Chaudhry won 6th place in 'Tower' overall congrats to the team on their amazing achievements.

With the first semester of high school coming to a close, instead of hearing sighs of relief, the hallways tend to be filled with students stressing out about midterms. Midterms this year were administered from January 9th to 15th. When asked, many students admitted their favorite part of the experience was the early dismissal, which gave them the chance to unwind at home or squeeze in a much-needed nap. Once midterms wrapped up, new schedules for the second semester were released to match the beginning of a new high school semester. While the opinions about the schedules are varied, many students just wish to tackle the next semester.

On January 20th, there was the first official snow day of the school year. Even though January 20th was already meant to be an early dismissal at 12:30, due to the fact that it was also Martin Luther King Jr. Day, many students welcomed the extra time at home to sleep in. However, some were not as lucky. While the majority of students had asynchronous assignments to complete, middle school students had zoom meetings until 12:30. Nevertheless, after 'school' ended, many decided to go out and enjoy the snow.

In January, multiple fundraisers—both school-related and future events— took place. The Model UN team held a Thai Food sale, with the goal of raising money for their upcoming trip to Boston in early February. Catering from Thai Lotus, they sold rice and noodles with beef, rice and noodles with chicken, and spring rolls. This fundraiser was a success, with students lined all the way down the high school hallway, each waiting to purchase their own plate. On the other hand, Noor-Ul-Iman School PTO presented a Gift Wrap Fundraiser, as a way to support the school “while shopping for Ramadan and Eid,” as they presented in their flyer. In addition, they provided a catalog, titled Mubarak Paper. The last day to contribute to the fundraiser was January 24, with anything bought from the catalog available for pickup in February. It is then planned to be distributed to families by the PTO.

This month, Noor-Ul-Iman School also welcomed their alumni back to campus. The alumni enjoyed a formal dinner, along with the chance to reminisce about their time at the school. For many, the memories brought joy as they reconnected with old friends, appreciating the strength of the bond Noor-Ul-Iman School had given them during their time as students. Likewise, plans were shared for Noor-Ul-Iman School's future expansion, giving way to excitement for what will house generations of students to come. They were able to tour the first and second floor together, with nostalgia coming in waves. Both Noor-Ul-Iman School's past and future were represented at the dinner, connecting in what was assuredly a memorable night for all.



SPORTS

LEAD WRITER: IBRAHEEM GHOURI

NOOR-UL-IMAN SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Versus Academy Charter: 36-54 (Loss)

- Shayan Ahmed: 8 points

Versus Dar al Arqam: 75-15 (Win)

- Saad Akthar: 16 points

Versus Highland Park: 50-60 (Loss)

- Yasin Latif: 18 points

Versus An-Noor Academy: 24-14 (Win)

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL

Versus Pillars Preparatory Academy 61-13 (Win)

- Suhayla AbdusShaheed: 12 points

- Zainab Chaudhry: 10 points

Versus Academy Charter: 49 - 23 (Win)

- Jenna Elmasry: 10 points

- Marium Ghauri: 9 points

- Suhayla AbdusShaheed: 9 points

Versus The Hudson School: 39 - 16 (Win)

- Zainab Chaudhry: 10 points

- Suhayla AbdusShaheed: 9 points

Versus The Wilberforce School: 20-32 (Loss)

- Jenna Elmasry: 7 points
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NATIONAL SPORTS NEWS

2024 NBA CUP

- The 2024 NBA Cup or the Emirates NBA Cup, concluded with the Milwaukee Bucks defeating the Oklahoma City Thunder on December 17th.
- The final score was 97-81.
- Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with his triple-double scoreline (26 points, 19 rebounds, and 10 assists). He earned the tournament's MVP award.
- Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the Oklahoma City Thunder scored 21 points, gathered 4 rebounds, and dished out 2 assists. However, his efforts weren't enough as the Thunder had no answer to the Buck's strong three-point shooting performance.



2024-25 NFL SEASON SO FAR

- The 2024-25 NFL season is heating up as the final weeks of the regular season goes by.
- The Kansas City Chiefs are leading the AFC with a 15-1 record, with their hopes of an undefeated season set ablaze by the Buffalo Bills. However, they are still the (debatable) fan favorites to win the Lombardi Trophy. The Bills are close behind with a 13-3 record.
- In the NFC, the Detroit Lions have emerged to the top with a 14-2 record, ahead of the Philadelphia Eagles, who have a 13-3 record.. The Lions have been voted to be the top of the NFC with a 15-2 record, according to ESPN. The 49ers had high aspirations, but fell short due to the amount of key players who got season-ending injuries.
- On the other hand, The New York Giants (3-13) and the Las Vegas Raiders (4-12) have spots on the bottom of the standings and are in contention to get the first pick in the draft, and with some very skilled players such as Shedeur Sanders, Travis Hunter, and Cam Ward entering the draft, these teams could go for a much-needed reformation.
- Lamar Jackson from the Ravens and Josh Allen from the Bills have been playing phenomenally and make strong cases for this year's MVP award.
- Super Bowl 59 will be held in New Orleans, what team are you rooting for?



COLLEGE FOOTBALL - 1ST ROUND PLAYOFFS TAKEAWAYS

- Penn State was able to win the first round of the playoffs with a great 38-10 victory over Southern Methodist University on midday Saturday.
- Texas was also able to pass the first round of the playoffs with an astonishing victory against Clemson 38-24. Their narrow victory highlights their resilience under pressure.
- Later that day, Ohio was able to defeat Tennessee with an amazing victory 42-17.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL - PLAYOFF OUTCOMES

- The 2024-25 college football season marked the debut of the expanded 12-team College Football Playoff, leading to the national championship game that took place on January 20, 2025. The Ohio State Buckeyes emerged victorious, deafening the Notre Dame Fighting Irish with a final score of 34-23. Ohio State entered the playoffs as the 8th seed but paved their way to a significant victory over the top-seeded Michigan in the semifinals. Notre Dame entered the playoffs at the 7th seed, setting the stage for a competitive final matchup.



NFL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

- As of today, the playoffs have reached the Conference Championship stage with the Philadelphia Eagles, Washington Commanders, Kansas City Chiefs, and Buffalo Bills remaining. The AFC Championship matchup consists of the Chiefs vs. the Bills while the NFC Championship matchup has the Eagles facing off against the Commanders. This marks the seventh consecutive AFC championship appearance for Kansas City, who are aiming to achieve their third straight super bowl title. Earlier this year, the Bills secured a 30-21 victory against the Chiefs. The Eagles are appearing in the NFC Championship for the ninth time, having won in 2017 and 2022. Rookie quarterback Jayden Daniels leads the Commanders and is hoping to be the first rookie to start in a Super Bowl.



OPINION PIECES

LEAD WRITER: HAMZA SALEEM

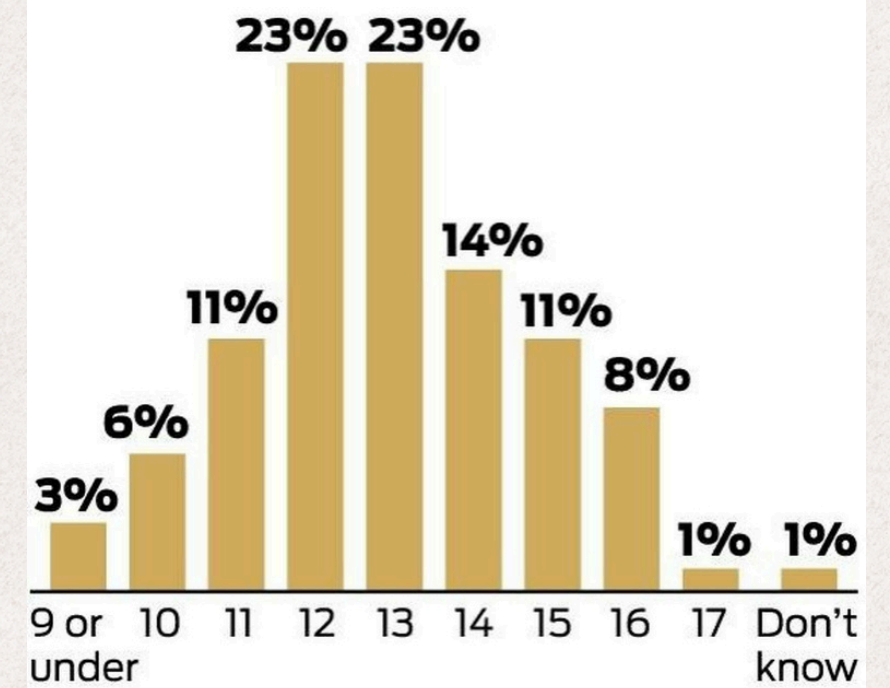
AT WHAT AGE SHOULD KIDS OWN A PHONE?

BEFORE 16: I feel like kids should get phones before the age of 16. Especially now, the world that we live in is dangerous and without a phone, children do not have a way to communicate with their parents if something happened. Alongside that, kids are constantly outside of their homes doing whatever it is they do, usually without their parents, and thus need phones for the purpose of communication strictly.

AFTER 16: Children should acquire a phone after the age of 16. Although it is useful for day to day life; only kids 16 and older actually need it. Kids should grow up with gadgets that grow their creativity and expand their thinking skills, such as outdoor games, sports, and reading. The youth who are exposed to screen time could view bad factors such as social media and negative content. The only thing phones would give to young people is a low attention span. Scrolling through reels, TikTok, or whatever other social media platform can be harmful to a child's development. Yes, it is agreeable that phones can be used for contacting parents while outside of the house; but when phones were not invented back in the day the kids managed just fine. It's the fact that this generation has become too dependent on phones, that we believe without them we wouldn't be safe. Our parents today would agree that they survived the outside world without needing a phone. That is why it is within my strong opinion that kids under the age of 16 shouldn't have a phone.

Of the three-fourths of teenagers who have mobile phones, most got them before reaching age 14.

Age when given first cell phone



Note: Figures are rounded

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project

STAFF PROFILE

LEAD WRITER: MAHA SHAIKH

At the end of November 2024, many Noor-Ul-Iman School students, staff, and families embarked on the trip of a lifetime. Together, they traveled to Madinah and Makkah, spending time at the Masjid performing various acts of Ibadah, including performing Tawaf around the Holy Kaaba, visiting very important historical sites, such as Masjid Al-Qiblatayn and the Cave of Hira, and listening to talks and Halaqas from the Shaikhs and Islamic teachers among them.



Ms. Doaa Orabi, one of the amazing teachers on this trip, shares her experience in this heartwarming interview. One reflection that Ms. Doaa has had from embarking on this beautiful trip was that, "The blessings of Umrah are great, SubhanAllah, as the prophet mentioned. From Umrah to Umrah your sins are forgiven. You recall all the history that makes you feel connected to Allah (SWT), the messenger (S), and the religion. I made dua to move to Makkah."

When asked about the most memorable part of the trip, Ms. Doaa answered, "This was the first Umrah with my students and was different; it was exciting. I was able to teach and help those who hadn't done it before. I loved experiencing it together. One of my favorite parts about going with the Noor-Ul-Iman School group was when the boys realized it was so crowded, so they made a circle around us while making tawaf to protect us from the crowd."

One of the most beautiful aspects of performing Umrah is being able to see the Kaaba for the first time. When asked to describe her experience, Ms. Doaa replied, "It was a very special moment. Once I entered, I never imagined the feelings I'd feel; I felt this indescribable greatness. You feel like you are nothing when you are in front of Allah; there are so many emotions at once. Allah (SWT) honored you to be there. He invited you, and while you are there, you are the guest of Allah. You feel blessed, and I truly didn't want to leave. I stayed there the whole day, and I just focused on the moment." Subhan'Allah! May Allah (SWT) allow everyone to experience this incredible moment!

One special part about this trip specifically was how the Noor-Ul-Iman School families got to encounter it together, learning from each other along the way. Ms. Doaa explains that one of the beautiful parts about this was, “The Jama’. Any kind of Ibadah, we encouraged each other. It was very meaningful. Everyone was helping each other: waking up in the morning, making tawaf together, reciting the Quran, and praying every prayer together. We helped each other to stay on track for Salah, we held halaqas about the prophet and about performing Umrah, and we went on a tour with everyone. In the past, when I have gone alone, I focused on the Kabah, but this time I went on the tour and I got to see things I never saw before.”



One of the most bittersweet moments about going on Umrah is eventually having to return back home. Although it is extremely difficult, we must pray to Allah (SWT) to carry the blessings and Ibadah along with us after Umrah, allowing us to return to our homes as a changed person. Ms. Doaa says, “Umrah is full of blessings. It is a gift that Allah gives you when you come back from Umrah that you are able to renew your intention.” Masha’Allah, this Noor-Ul-Iman School Umrah trip was an extremely memorable experience for everyone who attended. Thank you so much to Ms. Doaa for sharing her beautiful reflections!

THE OCULUS WORD SEARCH

LEAD CREATOR: RAHMA YOUSRY

RESILIENCE

Find 15 words related to the Syrian conflict and the Muslims' resilience during these difficult times.

G	Q	P	U	G	N	A	B	W	E	V	Z	X	T	A	G	H	D	E	B
U	R	O	Y	H	U	O	U	S	R	O	A	V	B	F	O	P	U	E	Q
R	D	S	X	B	R	I	B	V	W	W	Q	H	T	H	E	S	P	S	F
P	R		Z	S	V	M	D	K	Q	X	Q	U	B	D	O	O	P	N	J
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PERSEVERANCE	TRUST	EMAAN
REVOLUTION	HOPE	AWARENESS
JUSTICE	STRENGTH	COURAGE
TAQWA	PATIENCE	GRATITUDE
GUIDANCE	SPIRIT	POSITIVITY

THE OCULUS WORD SEARCH

LEAD CREATOR: RAHMA YOUSRY

ANSWER KEY

Find 15 words related to the Syrian conflict and the Muslims' resilience during these difficult times.



PERSEVERANCE
REVOLUTION
JUSTICE
TAQWA
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